

REMARKS

Each of pending Claims 10-13 was rejected in the above-identified Office Action as being anticipated by the cited Matoba patent. In this regard, independent Claim 10 has been amended and is believed to be patentable over the Matoba patent for the reasons given below. Similarly, Claims 11-13 which depend from claim 10 are also believed to be allowable.

In particular, amended Claim 10 requires an image pickup apparatus which has a sensor portion and an optical black portion, and which is arranged so that a scanning circuit (e.g., 20 in Figs. 9A-9B) starts scanning for the optical black portion (e.g., 53 in Fig. 9A), and instructs a decoder (e.g., 110 in Figs. 9A-9B) to start its control of the scanning circuit to scan the sensor portion (e.g., 50 and 52 in Fig. 9A) when the scanning circuit completes the scanning for reading out the signal of the optical black portion.

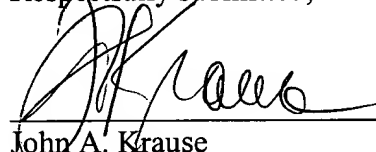
These above-characterized requirements of the present invention are not disclosed in the cited Matoba patent. That is, Matoba discloses the scanning of a pixel area which includes an optical black area (Column 13, lines 62-62 of the Specification) and a sensor area, by a vertical scanning decoder 204 (e.g., Figs. 16 and 25). The decoder 24 is arranged as shown in Figs. 18A-18B to scan the optical black area and a selected block of the sensor area. However, while the Office Action (page 3, lines 3-5) states that “it is inherent that the scanning circuit part and the decoder part of the vertical scanning decoder are in communication”, the reference of Matoba fails to disclose the specifically claimed feature of the relationship between the scanning circuit and the decoder which controls the scanning circuit and the decoder which controls the scanning circuit to scan the desired

block of the sensor portion, as required in amended independent Claim 10. In particular, the Matoba patent fails to teach that the scanning circuit is arranged to instruct the decoder to start the control of the scanning circuit to scan the sensor portion when the scanning circuit completes the scanning for reading out a signal of the optical black portion.

For all of the reasons given above, it is believed that the application is now in condition for allowance, and a formal Notice of Allowance is respectfully solicited.

Applicants' undersigned attorney may be reached in our New York office by telephone at (212) 218-2100. All correspondence should continue to be directed to our below listed address.

Respectfully submitted,



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